An Imperative Duty.

S. W. WILT.

Our remarks at this time we address to church members such as have been inducted into the body of Christ. It is a a self-evident fact that as soon as we espouse the cause of Christ we assume a responsible service,—this implies duties. What are these, and how shall we discharge them? The New Testament gives all the information required. We shall only call attention to, and give an outline of one of these duties, namely, ministers' support, coming from members of the church. The duty of furnishing him an adequate support we call attention to because we consider it of great importance. (There are other duties perhaps of equal importance.) Paul says to the church at Corinth, "Do ye not know know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." 1 Cor. 9. 13:4. Our Lord himself tells us "the laborer is worthy of his hire." In this we have the just claim of the minister presented. This being true every minister should have a suitable support. Next, Who is to give this support? Let the word answer this question." "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teaches in all good things." Gal. 6:6. If the church to which we belong has a minister who devotes himself to the preaching of the word of life; then we have a duty to perform. It is the imperative duty as taught in the word, to communicate to him that teacheth; and to do so liberally.

Right here the trouble begins. Some one begins to ask, how little he can possibly live upon, or get along with? Next one says, I will do my part with the rest, but I want to see how much others will give. I won't subscribe says the third one. I'll do what I feel able to do. This is not obeying the command. This is persuing a niggardly, stingy course. Consulting feelings, and letting the niggardly stingy course of others govern us. Consult the word. What does it say? Here is individual personal duty.—"Communicate," freely, amply, as the Lord has given and prospered you. Do this to your minister for the sake of Christ whom you serve. It is obeying him. It will be pleasing to him. We do not pretend to say how much you shall give but give sufficient so that the Lord can say to you, "Well done good and faithful servant,—you then have done enough, and not until then. Otherwise, you have left undone that which you ought to have done. Our Savior says, "To him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin." There is evidently a lack in our brotherhood as it regards ministerial support, and as long as this continues it now is, our cause cannot triumph as it would under more favorable circumstances. Our ministers in general are poor in this world's goods, and cannot afford to give their time and pay their own expenses. Were they able to do this it would still be unreasonable to expect it of them. Let us all wake up to a proper sense of our duty and do like the woman of old that received our Savior's approbation, because she did what she could.

International Sunday School Lessons.

BY REV. F. B. HARGREAVES.

Lesson 10. *June 6th.*

JESUS AND ABRAHAM.

John 8 31–38, 44–59, Golden Text, John 8, 56. Time, the next day after the last lesson. Place, the Temple at Jerusalem.

It was the morning of the eighth day. The Feast of the Tabernacles was over. It lasted only seven days, but the eighth day was a sort of holy convocation with special sacrifices of its own. Jesus had spent the night with a friend on the Mount of Olives, and now, in the early morning, He reappears in the temple to continue His teachings. Part of the time is spent in the court of the women, but it is evident the latter part of the lesson was delivered in the court of the Gentiles, as that was the only place in the temple in which the people would cast stones at Him. He was nearing the end of His ministry, and in the centre of religious thought and activity, Jerusalem, He now continues His sublime declarations of Messiahship and the enuciation of those splendid truths which are the heritage of our race. From Jerusalem the crowds would soon disperse to all part of the country, and in their hearts Jesus sows that blessed seed which to-day yields a magnificent harvest in the earnest lives of His devoted followers. Upon this occassion He was the central figure in the temple as He had been on the previous days of the feast. An eager crowd is gathered round Him, and to them He delivers His message of freedom. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." These words raised an angry storm of indignant protest from His hearers. If the Jew prided himself on one thing it was his freedom. He conveniently forgot the captivities, overlooked national defeats, ignored the present actual serfdom to Rome, and always imagined himself blessed with freedom. A part of his morning prayer was: Blessed be the Lord our God King of the Universe, who has made me a free man." The Jew looked back to Abraham, from whom he claimed descent, and contended that as Abraham's son he was free. With such feelings it was difficult for them to understand Christ's words, for He taught them of spiritual freedom. They looked for a Messiah who would restore the national glory, and yet they could not comprehend that "truth" without which there can be no permanent national glory. Their pride of descent was a false light to them; their descent availed them nothing; they were slaves to sin and form and ritual. They were not fit for national independence and its attendant honors; they were not fit for that spiritual kingdom which Christ came to establish, so he taught them the divine principle of liberty, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." For it is only in the truth of Jesus that we can get perfect freedom from the slavery of sin and thus be fitted for the true citizenship of Christ's Kingdom. It will be well for the world when it learns this lesson as the principle here taught by Christ furnishes the solution to those great social and economic questions which now agitate society. Our Savior closed His discourse by re-asserting His divinity, as He declared that He existed before Abraham.

LESSON THOUGTS.

1. True freedom can only be found in Christ.
2. Lineage is nothing; ceremony is nothing; the truth is everything.
3. Do not be deceived with false theories; get the truth as it is in Jesus.
4. In the teachings of Christ we have true light, and hence true liberty. Freedom of thought—not free thought; freedom of life not free living.

Uses of Suffering.

We remember a parable in which a preacher say: "Look at this flute; it was a piece of wood; what has made it a flute? The rifts, the holes in it." What life is there through which affliction does not make some rift? All went well till then; but through that rift in the life came thought and feeling. Doubt in us is created by some rift in our life, some loss creating a sense of grief, some question of despair. "So," said the preacher we heard, "I listened to a flute one day, complaining that it was spoiled by having a number of holes bored in it. 'Once,' it said, 'I was a piece of wood, very beautiful to look upon; now I am spoiled by all these rifts and holes.' And it said all this mournfully and musically, 'O thou foolish flute.' I said, 'without these rifts and holes thou wouldst only be a mere stick, a bit of mere hard, black ebony, soon to be thrown away. Those rifts and holes have been the making of thee; they have made thee into a flute; they are thy life, thy character, thy music and melody, and thou wilt not now be cast aside with contempt, but touched by even the fingers of future generations.' Thus sorrow in man should reveal to him his capacity for supernatural refreshment; his hard and sterile being is made to receive divine airs which make it musical in its sorrow."—*Sunday at home.*

Judge not.

It is my desire to write a few thoughts from the words of our Savior when he said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." It is quite too common for neighbors, and even church members to judge one another unjustly. I would refer the reader to what Christ says in Matt. 7:3, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." How often do we speak of persons and say something like this, He is not a very good Christian, he is dishonest, he loves money too well; and at the same time he that is judged might have good reasons to judge us of the same faults.

Christ also says in Matt. 7:5, "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam of thine own eye; and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Why shall we not first correct our own faults, and then go to our brother and tell him his fault? We should reason with him kindly, and try to help him instead of tell his faults to others, which will do him no good, and at the same time make his faults appear greater than they really are.

Let us rather, dear readers, labor and pray that God, when he comes to judge the world, may find no fault with us. May we hear the happy welcome, and have a share in the joys of that glorious home which he has prepared for all those who truly love him and look for his coming. C. M. B.

Devising Liberal Things.

The Church is awaking to the great necessity and privilege of planning on a more generous scale than hitherto, for the preaching of the Gospel to the outlying population of all Christian lands and to the heathen in every land. Surely these plans should not only be followed but be accompanied with prayers for larger blessings, for the conversion of *millions of souls*, for such an outpouring of the spirit that a "nation shall be born unto God in a day." God is waiting for these liberal prayers. His word is pledged to answer such prayers. Else, what means the promise, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it"? If systems of false religion in every land are tottering to their fall, the hosts of the Lord should not only muster all their forces for an immediate and persistent attack upon the crumbling edifices, but many earnest, importunate and world-embracing prayers should ascend to Him who only can give the victory, and whose words are "Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts." Not only millions of dollars for the treasury, but millions of souls for the Redeemer's crown.—*Pulpit Treasury.*

Womanly Maturity.

The man who meets and loves the woman of twenty-five is truly fortunate, and she is equally fortunate in meeting and loving him, says a writer in a feminine journal. At that age she seldom deceives. She may not have, she is not likely to have then, her first sentimental experience; but such experience at such an age is more than sentimental and rarely ever fleeting. She looks back at the youths she imagined she was enamored of between sixteen and eighteen, or often twenty-two and they are more than indifferent or repellant to her—they are ridiculous, and in some sort she as she then was, is ridiculous to herself. She cannot but be grateful to her destiny that her sympathies and affections have been reserved for a worthy object and a higher end. At twenty-five if ever, a woman knows and estimates herself. She is liable to emotional or mental mistakes, she is far surer of her fortune, because she feels that her fate is to a certain extent, within her own hands. Not only is she lovelier and more lovable broader and stronger than she has been, but her wedded happiness and powers of endurance are in a manner guaranteed.

SELECTED.

Life to the Christain is a continual coming to Christ. It must be so, whether coming for the first time or coming as we have often come before, seeking again and again more earnestly to come. We come by loving, with thanksgiving and praise, with prayer and holy effort. Let us faint not, but persevere. Our course is onward and upward—Christward—it is a journey of love. "O make me love Thee more and more!"